# AAS 2025 ASPIRATIONS PROGRAM



The John Morton Center for North American Studies





Turku, June 4–6, 2025 - DAY 1

### **Conference Program**

WEDNESDAY JUNE 4 (DAY 1)

8:30–9:30 REGISTRATION AND MORNING COFFEE

8:15-8:45 FEEL GOOD MORNING FLOW

9:30-11:00 PARALLEL SESSIONS I

Session 1a: Civil War Echoes and Aspirations: Grassroots Perspectives on Justice and Equality (Room PUB1) Chair: Karen V. Hansen

Julie Allen, Brigham Young University Kate Masur, Northwestern University Anders Bo Rasmussen, University of Southern Denmark

Session 1b: Identities, Communities, and Dreams (Room PUB4)

Chair: Mila Seppälä

Immigrants and American Aspirations: New Arrivals, New Expectations, Old Optimism Marko Maunula, Clayton State University "There is so much more freedom in the world now": Progressive Era Aspirations in Mass-Market Novels Jane Weiss, Kingsborough Community College of CUNY

"I hear America singing": Walt Whitman's Dream of a (Not So) Universal American Brotherhood Zélia Catarina Pedro Rafael, University of Iceland

Session 1c: Indigenous and African American Agency in the North American Borderlands (Room PUB5) Chair: Janne Lahti

Panelists: Daniel Caponio, University of Kansas Andrew Isenberg, University of Kansas Janne Lahti, University of Helsinki Vivien Tejada, UCLA

Session 1d: Nature, Climate, and Landed Possessions (Room PUB209) Chair: Reetta Humalajoki

Aspiring American Scandinavia: Attempts to Make Alaska Profitable with Northern European Knowledge Meeri Kataja, Montana State University

The Science-Security Dilemma: Ambivalent U.S. Aspirations in the Arctic Dabis Melinda, Pázmány Péter Catholic University

From Ethnic to Local: The Intersection of Regional Culture and Finnish America Mirva Johnson, University of Wisconsin-Madison

#### Session 1e: Aspirations and Failures at the Turn of the Twentieth Century

(Room PUB269) Chair: Nina Öhman

Panelists: Myrto Drizou, Nord University Jessica Hanssen, Nord University Jordan Howie, University of Toronto

#### Session 1f: Women's Activism and Empowerment (Room PUB309)

Chair: Jaakko Dickman

Literary Dimensions of Aspirations Behind the U.S. Antinuclear Activism: Nuclear Terrorism, Antinuclear Feminism, and Search for Identity in James Reich's Bombshell (2013) Inna Häkkinen, University of Helsinki

Solidarity for Reproductive Justice: "Acompañamiento" and Transborder Feminist Activism Nadia Nava Contreras, University of Turku

Aspiring to Participate Minna Uusivirta, University of Turku

11:15-11:30 OPENING (Room PUB1)

#### 11:30-12:45 NORDIC PLENARY I (Room PUB1)

Chair: Pekka Kolehmainen

# Incompossible Futures, Disrupted Presents: The Aspirations of Speculative Fiction

Jenny Bonnevier, Örebro University Steen Ledet Christiansen, Aalborg University

#### 13:00-14:00 LUNCH

#### 14:00-15:30 PARALLEL SESSIONS II

Session 2a: Teaching American Studies Outside of the Americas (Room PUB1) Chair: Emma Long

Panelists: William Glass, University of Warsaw Benita Heiskanen, University of Turku Emma Long, University of East Anglia Hilde Løvdal Stephens, University of Oslo

#### Session 2b: Limits of Representation (Room PUB4)

Chair: Mila Seppälä

Limits to Representational Aspirations: The Case of Taylor Sheridan's *Wind River* and Indigenous Women's Femicides Tereza Jiroutová Kynčlová, Charles University

Where Are You Really From? Emphasizing the Asian in Asian American Hải Nguyễn, University of Turku

Aspiring For Meaning: From Hyperreality to Trans-corporeality in Sally Wen Mao's *Oculus* Elina Siltanen, University of Eastern Finland

#### Session 2c: 19th Century Aspirations (Room PUB5)

Chair: J. Michelle Coghlan

The Conquerors of the Hispanic United States in the First Half of the 19th Century Alec Ainsworth, University of Texas at Austin

A Transnational Look on U.S. International Aspirations During the Turbulent Nineteenth Century Alessandro Huber, Università degli Studi Roma Tre

"Geting me my freedom Back a Gain": The Paternalist Dream of a Stolen Man Lawrence McDonnell, Iowa State University

Marching to their Own Drum: Conflicting Aspirations in Indian School Band Concerts, 1880–1904 Vincent Veerbeek, University of Helsinki

#### Session 2e: New Approaches to German and Scandinavian Immigrant Experiences in the United States (Room PUB269)

Chair: Janne Lahti Commentator: Dag Blanck, Uppsala University, Augustana

German Immigrants, Homesickness, and Suicide Alison Efford, Marquette University

Beyond the Swedish Maid: The Modern Study of Gender and Swedish America Erika Jackson, Colorado Mesa University

Scandinavians Navigate Child Institutionalization in Chicago, 1870s–1890s Tina Larsen, University of Southern Denmark

#### Session 2f: Pushing the Boundaries of Being (Room PUB309)

Chair: Pekka Kolehmainen

Transhuman Magnificence and Apelike Monsters: Robinson Jeffers and the Aspirations of American Naturalism Emelie Jonsson, UiT

From Anthropocentric Dystopia to Ecocentric Aspirations in Joan Slonczewski's A Door into Ocean Hamid Masfour, Sultan Moulay Slimane University

Aspiring Tricksters in the Age of Ecophobia: Self-Worth in Andrew Niccol's *Gattaca* (1997) Sophia Emmanouilidou, Ionian University, Greece, Department of the Environment

#### 15:30-16:00 COFFEE BREAK

#### 16:00-17:15 KEYNOTE ADDRESS I (Room PUB1)

Chair: Benita Heiskanen

#### We Go Low

Elisabeth Anker, George Washington University

#### 17:30-19:00 NAAS GENERAL MEETING (Room PUB1)

#### 19:00-21:00 CONFERENCE RECEPTION (PUB Lobby)

Turku, June 4-6, 2025 - DAY 2

#### **THURSDAY JUNE 5 (DAY 2)**

#### 8:30–9:30 REGISTRATION AND MORNING COFFEE

8:45–9:15 AMERICAN STUDIES IN SCANDINAVIA UPDATE (Room PUB1) Justin Parks, UiT

#### 9:30-11:15 PARALLEL SESSIONS III

Session 3a: What Remains of the Common? Politics, Ethics, Aesthetics (Room PUB1) Chair: Sinikka Grant

Shattered Remains: Richard Wright on the Destiny of "the Common" Mikko Tuhkanen, Texas A&M University

Seriality, Typicality, Fungibility: Echeverri's Impersonal Common Tom Roach, Bryant University

Autofiction aesthetics and the queer common E. L. McCallum, Michigan State University

#### Session 3b: Imagined Homelands – The Finnish-language Press in North America 1876–1923 and the Digital Study of Transnational Culture (Room PUB4) Chair: Adam Hjorthén

Panelists: Jussi-Pekka Hakkarainen, National Library of Finland Petri Paju, University of Turku Hannu Salmi, University of Turku Kirsti Salmi-Nikander, University of Helsinki

Session 3c: Aspirations and Imageries in the 2024 Elections (Room PUB5) Chair: Benita Heiskanen

Political Parody in Deepfake Videos of the 2024 US Presidential Election Outi Hakola, University of Eastern Finland

Latinos for Trump: Making Sense of the Emerging Realignment Markku Ruotsila, University of Helsinki, LCC International University

Donald Trump's 2024 Presidential Campaign and His Aspiration for Unlimited Power Alf Tomas Tønnessen, University of Agder

Session 3d: Women's Bodies, Illness, and Trauma in American Musical Theatre: An Exploratory Workshop (Room PUB209) Chair: Nina Öhman

Panelists: Brandi Andrade, University of Texas at Arlington Anne Healy, University of Texas at Arlington Session 3e: Promises Made, Promises Kept? (Room PUB269) Chair: Jørn Brøndal

Is There Still Such a Notion as American Exceptionalism? Zoltán Peterecz, Eszterházy Károly Catholic University

Broken Houses: On Failed Aspirations in the Modern Middle Class Home Tine Sommer, University of Southern Denmark

Make America Great Again? Assessing Trump's International Economic Policies Welf Werner, Heidelberg University

Contested Jubilee: The Histories of the United States Bicentennial 1976 Ulf Zander, Lund University

Session 3f: Imagined Geographies (Room PUB309)

Chair: Tuula Kolehmainen

Era Bell Thompson: Mapping North Dakota, Africa, and the World Cathryn Halverson, Mälardalen University

Versions of Inspiration, Aspiration, and Suffocation in Carson McCullers' *The Ballad of the Sad Café* Katalin Kallay, Károli Gáspár University

Picturing Appalachia: A Photographic Reckoning Jarkko Tanninen, University of Nottingham

Contested Imaginaries in the Cosmopolitan Utopias of Claude McKay "Lost" Novels Nahum Welang, Nord University

#### 11:30-12:45 NORDIC PLENARY II (Room PUB1)

Chair: Oscar Winberg

Boundary Crossing, Religion, and Music Randall J. Stephens, University of Oslo Nina Öhman, University of Helsinki, Finnish American Studies Association

Discussant: Hilde Løvdal Stephens, University of Oslo

#### 13:00-14:00 LUNCH

#### 14:00-15:30 PARALLEL SESSIONS IV

Session 4a: Power and Politics in the Twentieth Century (Room PUB1) Chair: Emma Long

The Politics of Aspiration: The Second Red Scare and the (un)American Dream Jodie Childers, Tulane University

Revolutionary Vanguard: Black Political Agency at the Turn of the 1970s Antoni Górny, University of Warsaw

Meeting Indigenous Aspirations? The LBJ and Nixon Indian Messages and American Indian Self-Determination Dean Kotlowski, Salisbury University

"Do you think Jimmy Hoffa is buried in my backyard?": The Continuing Search for America's Most Notorious Union Leader David Witwer, Penn State University

## Session 4b: Roundtable: The Aspirations and Challenges of Doing Historical Research of the United States in the Nordics (Room PUB4)

Chair: Oscar Winberg

Panelists: Leyla Belle Drake, Uppsala University Kasper Grotle Rasmussen, University of Southern Denmark Hilde Løvdal Stephens, University of Oslo Oscar Winberg, University of Turku

Session 4c: Race, Class, and Cultural Expressions (Room PUB5)

Chair: Elina Siltanen

Ambition, Failure, and Wallace Thurman's Turn to Pulp Fiction Sarah Gleeson-White, University of Sydney

Aspirational Masculinities on the Stand-up Stage Tuula Kolehmainen, University of Turku

The 1970s, Energy Crisis, and Maternal Work in the Poems of Bernadette Mayer and June Jordan Justin Parks, UiT

#### Session 4d: Experiences of Researchivism I: Roundtable (Room PUB209)

Chairs: Reetta Humalajoki & Mila Seppälä

Panelists: Alice Baroni, University of Turku Laura De Vos, Radboud University Hải Nguyễn, University of Turku Julie Sze, UC Davis

#### Session 4e: Scandinavia Home and Abroad (Room PUB269)

Chair: Janne Lahti

Be Scandinavian But Speak English: *The North*, a Failed Scandinavian-American Newspaper Venture in Minnesota, 1889–1894 Jørn Brøndal, University of Southern Denmark

How Did Vilhelm Moberg Learn About Native Dakota People in Minnesota? Ursula Lindqvist, Gustavus Adolphus College

"To be the master of your own land, that is worth a lot": On Emigrants' Quest Away and Home Helén Persson, Lund University

#### Session 4f: Queer Stories (Room PUB309)

Chair: Danielle Seid

Stonewall National Monument: Aspirations, Realizations, but Regrets? Wayde Brown, University of Georgia

The Lesbian in the Garden: Queer Nature in Elsa Gidlow's *On a Grey Thread* Aurora Eide, University of Tromsø Breath, Dreams, Resistance: Aspiration as Wake Work in Black Queer Writing and Practice Barbara Gfoellner, University of Vienna

#### 15:30-16:00 COFFEE BREAK

#### 16:00-17:30 PARALLEL SESSIONS V

Session 5a: Hope or Disillusionment?: Cultural and Blue-Collar Workers' Aspirations in Hollywood (Room PUB1) Chair: Oscar Winberg

Hollywood's Aspirational Reindustrialization Mikkel Jensen, Aalborg University

Clashes in Craftworld: Showrunner Aspirations and Streaming Platform Goals Dawid Junke, University of Wrocław

A Family That Looks Like Us? Politics, Sitcoms, and Contesting the Working-Class on Television Oscar Winberg, University of Turku

#### Session 5b: Navigating Cultural Tensions: Aspirations of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion across a U.S. Public Higher Education System (Room PUB4) Chair: Pekka Kolehmainen

Panelists:

David Cantaffa, State University of New York System Administarion Sinikka Grant, State University of New York Cobleskill Ritu Radhakrishnan, State University of New York Oswego

#### Session 5c: Pedagogical Aspirations (Room PUB5)

Chair: Hilde Løvdal Stephens

Aspirations, Blind-Spots, and Disciplinary Imaginaries: A Survey of the Place of Film, Media, and Popular Culture in *American studies in Scandinavia*, 1968–2024

Joel Frykholm, Stockholm University

Footnotes Against Institutions: Towards a Theory of (Academic) Refusal in the Campus Novel Markus Schwarz, University of Salzburg

#### Session 5d: Experiences of Researchivism II: A Zine-Making Workshop

(Room PUB209) Chairs: Reetta Humalajoki & Mila Seppälä

Panelists: Alice Baroni, University of Turku Laura De Vos, Radboud University Hải Nguyễn, University of Turku Julie Sze, UC Davis

#### Session 5e: Finnish-American Relationships (Room PUB269)

Chair: Nadia Nava Contreras

The American Aspirations to Aid the Grand Duchy of Finland Henry Oinas-Kukkonen, University of Oulu

The 20 Finnish Utopian Communities Teuvo Peltoniemi, Sosiomedia Oy

Finding Finns: Uncovering the Lived Experiences of Finnish Mariners in the American Civil War U.S. Navy Damian Shiels, Northumbria University

Session 5f: Love, Romance, Relationships (Room PUB309)

Chair: Elina Siltanen

Heiresses, Lonely Girls, and Marriage in the Turn-of-the-Century Urban America Aušra Paulauskienė, LCC International University

Transforming Tropes: Disney's Evolution in Cultural Sensibility and Social Themes Viktoria Sophie Lühr, Ecole des hautes études en sciences sociales

Romantic Love and New Sincerity in Jeffrey Eugenides' *The Marriage Plot* Elina Valovirta, University of Turku

#### 19:00-23:00 CONFERENCE DINNER (Restaurant Grädda)

Requires registration (separate fee)

Turku, June 4-6, 2025 - DAY 3

#### FRIDAY JUNE 6 (DAY 3)

#### 8:30–9:30 REGISTRATION AND MORNING COFFEE

#### 8:45-9:15 FEEL GOOD MORNING FLOW

#### 9:30-11:00 PARALLEL SESSIONS VI

#### Session 6a: Karl Marx in America: Author Meets Critics (Room PUB1)

Chair: Anders Bo Rasmussen

Panelists: J. Michelle Coghlan, University of Manchester Gregory Jones-Katz, Forschungskolleg Humanwissenschaften Niels Bjerre-Poulsen, University of Southern Denmark

Respondent: Andrew Hartman, Illinois State University

#### Session 6c: Failures and Unfulfilled Dreams (Room PUB5)

Chair: Tuula Kolehmainen

Unfilled Womanhood: Infertility and Miscarriage in the Black Club Women's Movement Elizabeth Gonzalez, independent scholar

"Dope aged well, unfortunately": Jemele Hill and Van Lathan's *Way Down in the Hole* and Resisting Anti-Black Racism Through Reflective Nostalgia Jeden Tolentino, Queen's University

Crying Hearts, Dead-End Roads: The Realist(ic) Fiction of Richard Yates András Basa-Tamás, Eötvös Loránd University

#### Session 6d: Society, Democracy, and Ideals (Room PUB209)

Chair: Pekka Kolehmainen

"Novels are democracy in action": Paul Auster's Democratic Fiction Ira Hansen, University of Turku

Contrasting Fantasies, Aaron Sorkin and the Political Right: Tensions between Aspirational American Narratives Anna Ferrari, Sapienza University of Rome

Pure Aspiration or Actual Impact? Resisting Electoral Manipulation After the Attack on the Capitol Maria Lindén, Finnish Institute of international Affairs, Tampere University

Is There a Conservative Utopia? The Hidden Aspirations of Russell Kirk Karoly Pinter, Pazmany Peter Catholic University

Sesssion 6e: Alternative Pasts, Presents, and Futures (Room PUB 269) Chair: Nadia Nava Contreras

Monumental Aspirations: Recalling for the Future Lene Johannessen, University of Bergen

Truth is Only a Matter of Time: Alternate History in Jim Lehrer's *Top Down* (2013) Maria Wiegel, University of Cologne

Articulating Central American Migrant Aspirations in US Latinx Superhero Comics Astrid Haas, University of Bergen

#### Session 6f: Activism, Rights, and Cultural Narratives (Room PUB309)

Chair: Jenny Bonnevier

Intersectionality and Cultural Memory: Reading Michelle Cliff's *Free Enterprise* (1993) as Intersectional Remembering Kaisa Ilmonen, University of Turku

James Kirchick, *Commentary Magazine*, and the Critique of the mid-2010s Intersectional Activism Olli Saukko, University of Helsinki

Aspirations of Intergenerational Human Rights Justice in the USA Panteleimon Tsiokos, University of Western Ontario

#### 11:15-12:30 KEYNOTE ADDRESS II (Room PUB1)

Chair: Reetta Humalajoki

Climate Justice Now! Julie Sze, UC Davis

12:45-13:45 LUNCH

13:45-15:15 PARALLEL SESSIONS VII

Session 7a: Landscapes and Lived Environments (Room PUB1)

Chair: Daniel Cobb

Natural Aspirations: The Vietnam War and Being in/with Nature Ron Ben-Tovim, Ben Gurion University of the Negev

W.P. Webb's *The Great Plains* and the Attempt to Define the American West Andrew Graybill, Southern Methodist University

Empowered Settlers Set Adrift: *Survivor*, the American Pacific, and Asian American Masculinity Danielle Seid, University of Hawai'I at Mānoa

#### Session 7b: Aspiring Towards Collapse: Political Exit Movements and Imaginaries of the End of the World (Room PUB4)

Chair: Kasper Grotle Rasmussen

"It's easier to imagine the end of the world than the end of capitalism": Post-Left Future Visions of U.S. Society Jaakko Dickman, University of Turku

"Go armed": Societal Collapse and the Political Identity of the Militia Movement Niko Heikkilä, University of Turku

"Weak men create hard times": Masculinity and the Imaginations of Societal Collapse in the Far-Right Vitalist Movement Pekka Kolehmainen, University of Turku

"Becoming more fabulous together": The Queer Politics of Radical Faeries Mila Seppälä, University of Turku Session 7c: Swedish Atlantic: New Directions in Swedish American Migration Histories I (Room PUB5) Chair: Lucia Hodgson

Panelists:

New Sweden Texas: Swedish Settlers and Slavery in Nineteenth-Century Texas Lucia Hodgson, Uppsala University

Crossing the Atlantic: Race and Slavery in Swedish Illustrations by Jenny Nyström Åsa Bharathi Larsson, Södertörn University

From Threat to Threatened: Swedish American Whiteness as a Racial Project Martin Lund, Malmö University

From Saint Barthélemey to Småland: A Mixed-Race Family in Nineteenth-Century Växjö Håkan Nordmark, Kulturparken Småland

The Swedish Atlantic and the Slave Trade, 1813–1836 Victor Wilson, Åbo Akademi

Session 7d: Recovering and Teaching Nineteenth-Century American Women Writers (Room PUB209) Chair: Jane Weiss

Panelists: Sari Edelstein, University of Massachusetts-Boston Travis Foster, Villanova University Claudia Stokes, Trinity University

#### Session 7e: Memory & Migration in Literature (Room PUB269)

Chair: Elina Siltanen

Aspiration Personified: Immigrant Stereotypes in *My New American Life* by Francine Prose Marta Koval, University of Gdansk

Romancing Naturalism: Cultural Memories of Masculinities and Genre Instability in the Work of Frank Norris Phillip Sams, University of Eastern Finland

Aspiring to Belong Both as Early Settlers and Innocent Bystanders to Colonialism in North America: The Swedish Colony in Swedish and Finnish Youth Novels of the 1930s Raita Merivirta, University of Turku

Session 7f: Self, Community, and Collaboration in Indigenous Studies (Room PUB309)

Chair: Laura De Vos

"I Can't help that God has made me So; I did not make my self so": Samson Occom and the Aspirational Indigenous Self Can Aydin, TU Dresden

Letters from the Singing Bowl: A Model for Artistic Collaboration for Indigenous Writers and Artists Kristiana Kahakauwila, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

Aspirational Partnerships: Tribal Land Conservancies in the Wider Los Angeles County Region Sonja Salminiitty, University of Helsinki

#### 15:15–15:45 COFFEE BREAK

#### 15:45–17:15 PARALLEL SESSIONS VIII

Session 8a: Native Americans and International Aspirations (Room PUB1) Chair: Reetta Humalajoki

Unexpected Aspirations: D'Arcy McNickle's Evolving Visions of Internationalism and Indigenous Futurity Daniel Cobb, University of North Carolina

"An Indian think tank": Native American Transnational Aspirations for Intellectual Sovereignty Lucie Kýrová, Charles University Prague

Imagine this Parallel Universe Today: The Radical Aspirations of the International Indian Treaty Council György Tóth, University of Stirling

#### Session 8b: Envisioning "America" (Room PUB4)

Chair: Niko Heikkilä

"A more perfect union"? Public Scholarship and the United States Constitution in a Polarized Society Adam Hjorthén, Uppsala University

Civilization in Wax: Promoting America as the Heir of Western Civilization at the 1964 World's Fair Elizabeth Kuebler-Wolf, University of Saint Francis Session 8c: Swedish Atlantic: New Directions in Swedish American Migration Histories II (Room PUB5) Chair: Marie Bennedahl

Panelists:

Swedish Women on Their Own: To America and Back Again in the Twentieth Century Marie Bennedahl, Linnaeus University

Unsettling Moberg's Emigrant Series in Swedish-American Heritage Fiction Jennifer Eastman Attebery, Idaho State University

Aspirational Scholarship: Scandinavian Studies and the Importance of Swedish Influence in the Early American Republic Gregory Gaines, University of Maine

Swedish Migration and Settlement in Latin America: Gendered Histories Anne Gustavsson, Umeå University; Jenny Ingridsdotter, Umeå University

"Swedish workers wanted": Labor, Race, and Gender among Chicago Swedes, 1890-1910 Erik Thosteman, Uppsala University **Session 8d: Racial Justice in History and Literature** (Room PUB209) Chair: Oscar Winberg

"...And justice for all?" Aspirations for Racial Equality in the History of U.S. Supreme Court Cases Samuli Hurri, University of Turku

Christopher Columbus "C.C." Haraway and the "Butter" Case: Education, Politics, Law, and Race in the Rural South During the Age of Segregation John Kirk, University of Arkansas at Little Rock

Bringing Columbus Home: Buffalo Soldiers and Aspirations of Freedom in Italy at the end of World War II Christian O'Connell, University of Gloucestershire

**Session 8e: Geographic Aspirations and Road Blocks** (Room PUB269) Chair: Justin Parks

Aspirations on Wheels: A Road Towards Hope for Disability Carmen Indurain, Public University of Navarre

Enduring Myths and Aspirations: The Last Frontier in Kristin Hannah's *The Great Alone* (2018) Catarina Moura, Nova University – FCSH

Aspirational Representations of an "Unremembered" War in Gina Apostol's Insurrecto Jenna Sciuto, Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts

#### Session 8f: Mental Health and American Psychiatry (Room PUB309)

Chair: Kaisa Ilmonen

Dissociating to Spite the Patriarchy: Pessimism, Apathy, and Mental Health in Contemporary Women's Fiction Marianne Kongerslev, Aalborg University

Sylvia Plath's Aspiration: The Correspondence Between Life and Literature in a World Attentive to Mental Health Francesco Di Perna, Roma Tre University

American Psychiatry Serving the Nation: Walking Hand in Hand to Create a Thriving America Mia Pohtola, University of Helsinki

#### 17:30-18:00 CLOSING REMARKS (Room PUB1)

#### 19:00–01:00 AFTER CONFERENCE PARTY AT ULLAKKO